

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7997

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 1060

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM CG

SUBJECT: ZAIRE HUMAN RIGHTS PAPER DELIVERED TO GOZ

REF: A) STATE 024545 B) STATE 022819 C) KINSHASA 11867

1. IN ABSENCE OF AMBASSADOR (WHO IS TRAVELING IN SHABA REGION) DCM CALLED ON ACTING COMMISSIONER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS IDZUMBUIR JANUARY 31. DCM DELIVERED TEXT OF ZAIRE HUMAN RIGHTS PAPER CONTAINED IN REF A, COVERED TALKING POINTS CONTAINED PARA 3, REF B, AND LEFT AIDE MEMOIRE INCORPORATING LATTER POINTS. HE TOLD IDZUMBUIR THAT TRANSLATION OF ZAIRE REPORT HAS BEEN REQUESTED BUT MIGHT TAKE SOME WEEKS TO PREPARE.

2. ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER, WHOSE ENGLISH IS FLUENT, READ NEW HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT DURING MEETING. IDZUMBUIR COMMENTED THAT HE HAD BEEN BRIEFED BY ACTING POLITICAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR NGANDU ABOUT EMBASSY'S DECEMBER 14 DEMARCHE AND HAD READ TEXT OF US LEGISLATION WHICH REQUIRED ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS, AS WELL AS LATE 1976 REPORT ON ZAIRE PROVIDED EARLIER BY EMBASSY (REF C).

3. ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTED ON ONLY TWO ELEMENTS OF NEW REPORT. NOTING STATEMENT UNDER PARA 3A: "ACCORDINGLY, FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND PRESS ARE RESTRICTED", IDZUMBUIR SAID RECORD WOULD SHOW THAT SINCE PRESIDENT MOBUTU'S JULY 1977 SPEECH, THERE HAD BEEN NOTABLE IMPROVEMENT IN THIS AREA. HE
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POINTED IN PARTICULAR TO FREEDOM WITH WHICH ISSUES RECENTLY HAVE BEEN DEBATED BOTH IN PRESS AND IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. IDZUMBUIR SAID THAT WHILE OPEN CRITICISM OF POLICIES AND PERFORMANCE IS ALLOWED, AND EVEN ENCOURAGED, GOZ STILL FEELS OBLIGED TO OPPOSE CRITICISM DIRECTED AT INDIVIDUALS IN POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY WHEN SUCH CRITICISM IS INCURRED BECAUSE THOSE INDIVIDUALS ARE CARRYING OUT OFFICIAL GOZ POLICIES.

4. IN HIS ONLY OTHER COMMENT ON SUBSTANCE, IDZUMBUIR SAID (PRACTICALLY AS AN ASIDE) THAT STATEMENT AT END OF PARA 3 C OVERSTATED CASE. WHILE IDZUMBUIR ADMITTED THAT TO ATTAIN POLITICAL OFFICE A ZAIRIAN CITIZEN MUST BE A PARTY MEMBER, HE SAID THERE WAS NO "REQUIREMENT" THAT THE ASPIRANT BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE MPR. AT LEAST AS FAR AS APPOINTIVE POLITICAL OFFICE WAS CONCERNED, IDZUMBUIR SAID, DEMONSTRATED QUALIFICATIONS FOR PERFORMING THE JOB WERE MORE IMPORTANT IN THE PROCESS OF CHOOSING THAN WAS THE ZEAL WITH WHICH THE CANDIDATE CARRIED OUT HIS PARTY FUNCTIONS.

5. COMMENT: MEETING STARTED OUT IN SOMEWHAT STRAINED ATMOSPHERE. HOWEVER, AS DISCUSSION PROGRESSED AND THE ACTING COMMISSIONER ABSORBED THE REPORT AND TALKING POINTS, TONE OF CONVERSATION TOOK ON NORMAL CORDIALITY. IDZUMBUIR'S IMPROMPTU ORAL REPLY TO OUR PRESENTATION WAS BRIEF AND PRO FORMA, GIVING LITTLE INDICATION HOW GOZ MAY EVENTUALLY REACT TO REPORT. BOTH FOREIGN MINISTER UMBA AND PRESIDENT MOBUTU ARE TRAVELING IN EUROPE, AND ANY FURTHER GOZ REACTION TO NEW HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT PROBABLY WILL BE DELAYED AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THOSE OFFICIAL RETURN.
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